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SUBJECT: ADRIATIC CHARTER FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEET
SEPTEMBER 23 ON THE MARGINS OF UNGA

¶1. Classified by EUR Deputy Assistant Secretary Stuart Jones
for Reasons: 1.4 (b and d)

¶2. (U) September 23, 2009; 5:00-6:00 p.m.; New York, New
York.

¶3. (U) Participants:

U.S.

EUR Deputy Assistant Secretary Stuart Jones
EUR/SCE - Cathy Westley (note taker)

Adriatic Charter

Albanian Foreign Minister Ilir Meta
Bosnian Foreign Minister Sven Alkalaj
Croatian Foreign Minister Gordan Jandrokovic
Macedonian State Counselor Zoran Dabic
Montenegrin Foreign Minister Milan Rocen
Observer: Serbia Assistant Minister Vuk Zugic

¶4. (SBU) Summary: Bosnian Foreign Minister Alkalaj led a meeting of the Adriatic Charter (A5) Foreign Ministers on the margins of UNGA on September 23. EUR DAS Jones participated for the U.S., and Assistant Minister Zugic was present as an observer from Serbia. The A5 partners reiterated support for the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan and outlined current and future contributions. Both Bosnian FM Alkalaj and Montenegrin FM Rocen described their efforts to apply for NATO Membership Action Plans (MAP), and asked for support. FM Alkalaj offered an idea for the A5's consideration involving designating military training centers with special niche capabilities in each country, and offering regional training together, particularly prior to deployments. A5 members agreed to consult with their Ministries of Defense and discuss the idea at the September 29 MFA NATO political directors meeting. FM Alkalaj briefed on the successful "Combined Endeavor" NATO exercise held in Banja Luka September 14-17, and outlined his plans for the remaining months of A5 events under the six-month Bosnian chairmanship. Serbian Assistant Minister Zugic noted Serbia was happy to be an observer in the A5 and participate in Partnership for Peace (PfP) and other activities but remained concerned about the majority of NATO members having recognized Kosovo. End Summary.

Support for NATO ISAF Participation

¶5. (C) Bosnian FM Alkalaj noted that participation in the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) was important for NATO aspirants to show readiness to join the fight, and asked for everyone to describe their plans.

Macedonian State Counselor for Multilateral and Security Affairs Zoran Dabic said Macedonia would continue to strengthen its contribution to ISAF. In 2009, Macedonia enhanced its presence to 167 troops on the ground, serving with the British in Kabul and participating in Provincial Reconstruction Teams. In 2010, the Macedonian government plans to increase its contribution by 50%, which would bring the total to approximately 250, including contributions to civilian structures. Croatian FM Jandrovic called Afghanistan a top international priority, and said it was important for NATO aspirants to participate in ISAF to demonstrate to NATO their capacity, political will and ability to meet NATO standards. He welcomed in particular the contributions of Bosnia and Montenegro in this regard, and said Croatia will continue to contribute to ISAF. It currently has almost 300 troops serving with the Germans in the north.

¶ 6. (C) Montenegrin Foreign Minister Rocen said Montenegro was finalizing plans to deploy troops to ISAF by the end of February or March of 2010, to include an infantry platoon of 25 soldiers, a medical team of three members, two staff officers and one logistics officer with the Hungarian contingent under German command. Albanian Foreign Minister Meta said Albania was strongly committed to ISAF. As a new NATO member, it sent an additional unit of 110 troops to serve with the Italians in Herat, and it planned to send a

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20-person medical team soon. Bosnian FM Alkalaj said it had designated 10 troops to serve in ISAF, but recognized that Bosnia needed to do more. The Minister of Defense recently returned from a trip to Kabul, and the government is strongly considering sending approximately 200 troops in the near future.

New Idea to Improve NATO Interoperability
And Regional Cooperation

¶ 7. (C) FM Alkalaj proposed that A5 members consider building regional capacities for training and deployment by designating each country's training centers with different special niche capabilities, and offering joint training to the countries, particularly prior to deployments. He suggested that each country discuss the idea with its Ministry of Defense and others, and bring some initial responses to the Adriatic Charter NATO political directors meeting in Sarajevo on September 29.

MAP Applications of BiH and Montenegro

¶ 8. (C) FM Alkalaj said Bosnia planned to present its Membership Action Plan (MAP) application on October 2 in Brussels. A delegation led by President Komsic, the Foreign and Defense Ministers and the Chief of Defense would present it; by happenstance all ethnic groups would be represented. He emphasized it would add an additional pillar of stability in Bosnia to be under a NATO umbrella. He said he hoped its MAP application would be considered at the December Ministerial and asked for the support of the three NATO members present - Albania, Croatia and the United States.

¶ 9. (C) Montenegrin Foreign Minister Rocen spoke at length, beginning by looking the Serbian observer in the eye and noting that countries will not lose their identity by joining NATO. Rocen said Montenegro understood NATO was not a charity organization, and that it was necessary to fulfill the requirements for membership. He was encouraged by the April NATO communiqu, and pleased by the strong support of neighboring countries, the U.S. and the Alliance. He noted Montenegro's successful participation in the "Combined Endeavor" exercise. He offered a non-paper on Montenegro's MAP application, and asked for support, noting Montenegro was eager to contribute to NATO's priorities.

¶10. (C) Croatian FM Jandrovic said Croatia in principle supports all EU and NATO aspirants and wishes the best to all on their efforts. On MAP, he noted Croatia would be happy to help both countries fulfill all requirements and provide technical assistance. Macedonian State Counselor Dabic said with a smile that since Macedonia is in its 11th cycle with MAP, it would be happy to provide any and all technical assistance, and invited both countries to visit Skopje for help. Albanian FM Meta said he offered his strongest support for both countries, efforts. DAS Jones said he hoped to be able to share news on the United States's position on MAP with both countries shortly.

Operation "Combined Endeavor" a Success

¶11. (C) FM Alkalaj briefed on the NATO "Combined Endeavor" exercise held in Banja Luka September 14-17, and noted it was the first time NATO held such an exercise on a non-NATO member country's soil. He said 95% of tests were passed, and that SACEUR Admiral Stavridis told them he was pleasantly surprised at its success.

Plans for Future Events of A5

¶12. C) FM Alkalaj outlined Bosnia's plans for the Adriatic Charter under its chairmanship:

-- September 29 - MFA NATO Political Directors Meeting in Sarajevo

-- October 19-23 - Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Meeting, in part to discuss raising public awareness of the benefits of NATO membership

-- October TBD - Members of Parliament Meeting

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-- November 18 - Ministers of Defense Meeting

-- December TBD - Ministers of Foreign Affairs Meeting

Serbia as an A5 Observer

¶13. (C) Serbian Assistant Minister Vuk Zugic said he reiterated Serbia's view that developing regional ties and good relations was important, and that Serbia is pleased to be an observer in the Adriatic Charter. Partnership for Peace (PfP) activities are a priority for Serbia, which signed a security agreement in 2008 and plans to open a mission to NATO soon; an Ambassador has been designated. However, Serbia must point out the difficulty presented in NATO cooperation because most NATO member countries have recognized Kosovo. Serbia believes NATO assistance to the Kosovo Security Force is illegal, but believes that KFOR must remain as the main security provider. Serbia's primary Euro-Atlantic goal is to join the European Union.

Concluding Remarks

¶14. (C) FM Alkalaj thanked everyone for a good meeting, and asked DAS Jones to make concluding remarks. DAS Jones said the meeting reminded him of the shared ambition of South Central European countries and the importance of Euro-Atlantic integration to promote stability. Regional cooperation is vital, as is continuing on the path to EU and NATO integration. The idea on developing niche capability and cooperative regional training merits consideration, and consultation with Ministries of Defense will be important. DAS Jones said Serbia and the United States have "agreed to disagree" on Kosovo, but emphasized that Kosovo is an

essential part of the region, and its political and economic stability are in everyone's interest. Given the early development of its defense institutions, it would be premature to consider Kosovo for A-5 membership. But, Kosovo should be factored into regional planning and organizations.

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